



Disclosure &
Barring Service

Police Performance Information July 2026

Processing Times

The average time taken to process all applications in June was:

Enhanced – 13.5 days

Standard – 1.2 days

Basic – 0.9 days

Police performance

Of the 52 police forces and law enforcement agencies (e.g. National Crime Agency) that DBS commissions to carry out checks on their behalf, DBS sends 3 million checks per annum to forces.

Of those, in June:

- on average it took 27 days for the police to return a check that had been sent to them
- 10 forces, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Thames Valley, Sussex, Dyfed-Powys, Avon & Somerset, Cleveland, Northumbria, Cambridgeshire, Herefordshire and West Yorkshire) were experiencing delays.
- 75% was the average of Aged cases held by forces at the beginning of the month which were completed by the end of the month.
- The number of aged cases decreased from 23,661 to 11,434 cases due to the Hampshire IT issue generating significant update service referrals is now being resolved.
- 42 of the 52 Police Disclosure Units have less than 100 Aged cases, 22 of those having 10 or less.



The overall volume sent to forces was 10.3k (3.9%) over forecast across June. Since October 2025 forces have received circa 97k over forecast.

As of June, there are a total of 1,166 staff in post at forces against a requirement of 1,302. The vacancy variance is 136 and there are 115 staff in training.

The leaving and starting of staff across the forces is a constant challenge, with successful recruitment campaigns routinely taking three months, police vetting adding a further three months and training then taking at least six to nine months. This means the full positive impact from additional, newly recruited staff is not felt for a considerable period.

Avon & Somerset productivity has been impacted due to the unit receiving over forecast volumes. These volumes should return back to more normal forecasted levels from June onwards and aid recovery.

Cambridgeshire productivity impacted by short term sickness and training of new starters. Vacancies are in the process of being recruited with 3 successful FTE candidates currently going through the recruitment/vetting process.

Cleveland has a recruitment campaign underway to fill 2 FTE vacancies with both preferred candidates now going through the recruitment/vetting process.

Dyfed Powys has been impacted by recruitment issues due to lack of candidates; they have 3.60 FTE vacancies. They are now awaiting vetting on 2.00FTE with 1 FTE starting 01/06/2026. Staff are working continual overtime, which has also been offered out to other departments, with 6 staff members now assisting; two other forces are assisting with less complex work streams.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight IT error from May 25 has been resolved and the related outstanding cases have been completed. 3.97 FTE currently being recruited however 2FTE are from the unit as career progression, therefore another advert will need to be created to backfill. A meeting has been held to look at the Units recovery, including staffing structure, and further discussions are ongoing.

Hertfordshire productivity was impacted by short term sickness, and training of new starters. Vacancies are in the process of being recruited with 5 successful FTE candidates currently going through the recruitment/vetting process.

Northumbria have 1 FTE vacancy and interviews were arranged however, due to candidates withdrawing they will need to go to advert again. Staff are becoming more confident with their new system and a system issue which meant cases had to be double keyed has now been resolved which should assist in improved productivity and the aged profile.

Sussex have made significant progress reducing aged cases. 2 FTE joined in Apr 26 and are in training with a further 2 FTE expected to commence in July 26; there has been 1FTE leave post in June.

Thames Valley productivity impacted by experienced staff leaving the unit. They have 7.43FTE in vacancies with recruitment underway to backfill. A meeting is planned for July to discuss measures to accelerate recovery.

West Yorkshire performance has declined due to receiving above forecast volumes which has inflated work in progress and turnaround times. Vacant posts of 7FTE have been recruited with 5FTE due to join mid-July.

DBS works with all police forces and law enforcement agencies on a daily basis to ensure checks are completed as quickly as possible. All applications that exceed 60 continuous days with any force are automatically identified by DBS, through scheduled daily reports, issued to forces to complete as soon as possible.

Each of the forces who are experiencing delays are at various stages of recruitment and training of new staff that, once fully productive, will support them in reducing Aged volumes further and achieving SLAs.

Background Information

Why do checks go to the police?

For Enhanced DBS checks only, applications will be sent to a police force if there's a potential match against the names on the application form and police systems. This means that even if an applicant has always resided in one area of the country, their check can be sent to a police force in another area that holds details of a person with the same or similar names to the applicant.

The only exception to this is if the individual is applying for a role that involves working in their own home, such as a foster carer. In this case, even if there is no potential match, the application will still be sent to relevant police forces and law enforcement agencies, so they can carry out a check on other individuals who reside at, or frequent, their home.



Throughout this process the police may need to gather information from other organisations. There are other instances where DBS checks may be delayed, such as missing, unclear, or incorrect information. Any issues on an application form, such as missing or incorrect information, will flag a 'conflict' and the application will come back to DBS to clarify the information by contacting the employer, RB, or the applicant. This will inevitably increase the length of time the DBS check takes.

If there is a match

If there is a match on the Police National Computer (PNC), or against the data held by police forces or law enforcement agencies, we'll send the application to the relevant police forces or law enforcement agencies.

If there is no conflict, the forces will check for any information they hold that is relevant to the specific workforce the applicant is applying to work with, for example, the child workforce. If there is no information, the application comes back to DBS.



If they do hold information, they will assess the information's relevance to the workforce. They will decide if it is relevant and should be disclosed on the DBS certificate. Most of the time, certificates do not contain any 'approved information', as the police have decided not to disclose any information. However, they have still had to spend time reviewing the information before

that decision can be taken. These checks can take a bit of time, especially if there are several forces involved.

Factors affecting performance

There are several other factors which can cause delays in forces returning checks within the SLA, including:

- a high demand for our services
- assessment of the information they hold, including in some cases obtaining legal advice on whether it appropriate for employment purposes
- offering representations or responses from representations, which can result in further information being required

